

LETHBRIDGE: GALT GARDENS PARK

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Occasional Paper No. 22

The Lethbridge Historical Society

P.O. Box 574

Lethbridge, Alberta

T1J 4A2

1985

Alex Johnston
Sir Alexander Galt Museum
Lethbridge, Alberta

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By

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INTRODUCTION

On 13 October 1884, Elliott Torrance Galt, general manager of the newly-organized Alberta Railway & Coal Company, ordered work to begin on the construction of a 109-mile [175-km] long narrow gauge railway line from Dunmore, on the Canadian Pacific main line near Medicine Hat, to Coalbanks on the Belly River. Transport of coal from the North Western Coal and Navigation Company's Belly River mines to Medicine Hat by steamboat and barge had failed. Since he could not afford a standard gauge railroad, Sir Alexander Galt had decided to build a narrow gauge line to get his coal to market.

The detailed survey of the new line had been completed earlier. Its western terminus, on the prairie level above the Belly River near the Galt company riverbottom drift mines and the hamlet of Coalbanks (already popularly known as Lethbridge), had been mapped. Plans were in hand for rail yards, a roundhouse, a water tank, a station, an inclined railway and a bankhead. It was obvious that a town would spring up on the prairie level around these facilities. Railway-building had already triggered an economic boom, with Dunmore being transformed into a bustling construction camp.

Sometime in the late summer or fall of 1884 Elliott Galt and his father devoted an hour or two to the drawing up of a town plan. Sir Alexander probably concentrated on town and street names, as this gave him a chance to flatter officials and gratify the vanity of shareholders of his various companies. Elliott likely sketched the plan, which consisted of a simple grid system of streets and avenues south of the proposed railway station.

The plan encompassed the area bounded by Macleod Road [1st Street South, since abandoned], Barones Road [1st Avenue South], Bartlett Street [12th Street South], and Courtland Street [6th Avenue South]. A feature that soon proved its usefulness was 100-foot [30-m], instead of conventional 66-foot [20-m], wide roadways. Another noteworthy feature was a ten-acre [4.05-ha] block which was designed to be a park and playground—a breathing space—for the city that Elliott Galt and his father were convinced would one day surround it.

During this time Sir Alexander saw a lot of the Winnipeg-based Hudson's Bay Company land commissioner, Charles John Brydges. Galt owed the HBC \$16,080 for Winnipeg town lots and his ability to pay was suspect. Nevertheless, Brydges was a friend and a shareholder in Galt's 1882 North Western Coal & Navigation Company, Limited.

In February 1885, Brydges was persuaded by Galt to send Montague Aldous, DTS, an experienced HBC land surveyor, to southern Alberta. Aldous inspected about 25,000 acres [10 125 ha] of HBC lands in the vicinity as well as the 422,400-acre [171 072-ha] land grant to be given to the Galt company for building the Dunmore-Lethbridge narrow gauge railway. The Galt company paid Aldous' expenses; part of its agreement with him was that he would lay out the new prairie level townsite.

Aldous undoubtedly worked from the sketches earlier prepared by Elliott Galt and his father. He completed the townsite survey in March and prepared detailed plans. Town lots were available for sale by 9 May 1885. The prairie level town began to take shape on 1 August. It was officially named Lethbridge on 15 October. By 31 December, about 1,000 people had settled in the new community.

The ten-acre [4.05-ha] block sketched by the Galts was surveyed in two parts: the outside boundaries which now comprise 1st Avenue, 7th Street, 3rd Avenue and 5th Street South; and the central reserve, a 200 x 200-foot [61 x 61-m] area containing portions of each of the four blocks making up The Square. One purpose of the reserve, even in 1885, seemed to be to impose additional controls on use of the property. Separate land titles were issued for each of the main portions of the proposed park and the central reserve. Early news reports referred to the area as the square, but the name was soon capitalized to The Square, sometimes The Public Square.

The purpose of the reserve was, and is, a puzzle. It is shown on Charles A. Magrath's Town of Lethbridge 1890 map, which included Aldous' original survey, and is described on a certificate of title dated 12 April 1898. There are those who still think that Elliott Galt and his father, at

Galt Gardens about 1910.



least initially, visualized a personal mansion on the central reserve surrounded by what is now Galt Gardens Park. This seems unlikely. Galt himself said in 1908 he intended that, "at some time the reserve in the centre should become the site of a public building, worthy of the site, in the nature of a gift building." But his intentions were and are far from clear.

The business district began to develop on the west and south sides of the park and somewhat later on the east side. At the time the Square was simply an expanse of native vegetation. Nevertheless, it proved to be useful as a place to tie up horses and park travois, carriages, stage-coaches and wagons or as a location to rest oxen from the increasingly-fewer bull trains. From this circumstance a local myth has evolved, namely, that the Square was set aside by the Galts as a turning around place for the bull trains from Fort Benton. Round Street [5th Street South], it was said, was so-named because the bull trains turned 'round there.



Calgary vs Lethbridge in a baseball game played in 53°F temperatures on 27 January 1906. The game generated international publicity for the "Banana belt" of southern Alberta.

We have Elliott Galt's own 1908 statement that the ten-acre [4.05-ha] block was set aside in 1885 as a park and playground for the town. Round Street was named after Edmund Round, a shareholder in the Galt company. Actually the last bull train to haul supplies over the Benton or Whoop-Up Trail traversed the route in early summer 1885 on its way to Fort Macleod and never came near the Square. The only "bulls" ever to set foot in the park likely were oxen used to haul upland hay into Lethbridge from the Milk River Ridge.

By 27 March 1889 calls for improvement of the property were being heard. "Now that spring is again opening out and the base ball and cricket clubs have organized, the question of fencing the square comes up once more for consideration. Last fall a subscription list was started and some money was collected. The

NWC&NCo promised to supply the posts if citizens would dig postholes and enclose the square with light chain. Such action would prevent thoughtless teamsters from driving across the playing fields and would improve the appearance of the town." By 1 May, the property was being fenced. "This will prevent its being cut up by traffic from every direction," said the editor of the *Lethbridge News*.

The square was in the *News* again on 9 October 1889 when the editor waxed indignant about the unsightly appearance of the base ball fence [backstop] on the Square. "The Board of Trade should do something!" he fumed.

The town's first storm sewer was a square wooden pipe made by nailing 2 x 12-inch [5 x 30-cm] tops and bottoms to 2 x 8-inch [5 x 20-cm] sides. It was installed about 1891 to drain into the head of a coulee behind the Lethbridge Hotel the water that tended to pond and to flood adjacent roadways in the low-lying southwest corner of the Square.

Nine underground water cisterns, each holding about 15,000 gallons [57 m³], were constructed at several locations in the business district and NWMP Barracks. Two of them, one to protect miners' cottages in the 1st Avenue, 2nd and 3rd Street area, and a second in the Square, were installed in 1885 and 1886. The others were put in place in the early 1890s. The tanks were designed to provide water for the volunteer fire department's steam fire engine, which pumped water and forced it under pressure through a hose. These brick-lined, jug-shaped cisterns, one of which was located in the southeast corner of the Square, were maintained as reservoirs in case of accident or emergency until about 1912.

A bandstand was erected on the Square about 1889. It was simply a raised platform of raw lumber decorated while in use with bunting of various colors. It was located about 100 feet [30 m] inside the Square directly east of what is now 118-5th Street South. On 3 July 1906 council asked the Lethbridge Iron Works to fabricate about a dozen iron benches for the Public Square, each bench to be ten feet [3.0 m] long. Three sides of the Square were to be plowed and cinder paths built; the north side of the park had already been done. And on 26 July 1907, council gave permission to local hotelmen to erect tents on the north end of the Square during Fair Week to take care of overflow visitors. Fires were not permitted. The Board of Trade publicity committee arranged to supply cots.

A lengthy editorial in the *Lethbridge News* of 8 June 1906 summed up local feelings about the public park. It said in part, "The square is one of our most valuable public assets. It enhances the value of every property facing upon it. One of the most pleasant sights in Lethbridge, both to the eye and to the mind, is offered by the groups of young men and boys who find in the square every summer evening a place for athletic games they would otherwise lack."

A QUESTION OF OWNERSHIP

By 1907, Lethbridgians had long since decided that they owned the Square. Council and the Board of Trade had done pretty much as they wanted with the property since 1889, apparently without any direction or interference from the Galt company. The only question citizens had in their minds was the ownership of the central reserve. On 26 December council decided the matter should be clarified and resolved, "That a committee be appointed to communicate with Alberta Railway and Irrigation Company [AR&ICo] officials in connection with the Reserve portion of the City Park so that our position in the matter may be assured." Ten days later council met in committee of the whole and moved, "That it is the opinion of this committee that the square is the most suitable place for a new courthouse, provided arrangements can be made with the company and a by-law is passed by ratepayers."

By this time Elliott Galt must have been getting annoyed. He had given up the position of general manager of the AR&ICo in 1905 for health reasons but remained as president of the company. Some time between early January-late February 1908, he must have reminded council in unmistakable terms that the city did not own the Square and that council was in no position to suggest that a courthouse be located there.

Council sought legal advice and found to their consternation that Elliott Galt was right. On 2 March 1908 alderman Robert Watson reported, "That the solicitor's letter re Square be received and filed and a special committee appointed to see the AR&ICo and learn upon what terms, if any, the City can acquire from that company the land known as The Square." The special committee consisted of William Carlos Ives, chairman, Hugh McBeth and William Hutton.

It is unlikely that committee members met very often—if at all—with the reclusive Elliott Galt, then 58 years of age and suffering from a skin cancer on the right side of his face. Instead, they dealt with his brother-in-law, Charles Alexander Magrath, also nearing the end of his tenure in the city of Lethbridge. Magrath wanted Elliott and John Galt, the latter Elliott's half-brother and a director of the AR&ICo, to give the Square to the City of Lethbridge although Elliott Galt thought such a move to be premature. However, Magrath proved to be very persuasive and Elliott Galt finally agreed to give the property to the city.

Ensuing developments were discussed by council on only one occasion: the minutes of the 28 September 1908 meeting indicate that Elliott Galt had given the Public Square to the city, except for the 200 x 200-foot [61 x 61-m] reserve in the centre. The property was to remain undivided. Council was to expend what it could afford for park purposes. The right of ingress and egress to the centre was to be restricted [actually, it was to be reserved].

In light of the importance of the park to the city, and since it is still arousing controversy 80 years later, newspaper reports of the transfer of the property are given in their entirety below:

"City Is Owner Of Square

E. T. Galt Placed It In Possession Of The City"

"The city is to own the Square. On Saturday night the special committee appointed by the council, including the Mayor [Henderson], Aldermen W. C. Ives and Hugh Macbeth, met E. T. Galt, the president of the AR&ICo, and he at that time gave the city the Square. The exact conditions attached to the gift are not for publication until after a special council meeting is held tonight when the report of the committee will be published."

Lethbridge Daily Herald 28 September 1908

"Terms Of Transfer Of The Square.

Given Out At A Special City Council Meeting.
Plot In Centre Still Reserved."

"The report of the committee was read. It had already been approved by Mr. E. T. Galt, as had also the resolution which immediately followed.

"The report and resolution were as follows:
To The Mayor and Council:

"Your special committee, appointed to meet Mr. Galt and the other officials of the AR&ICo with reference to the property in the city known as the public square, met with Mr. Galt, together with Messrs Augustus M. Nanton, John Galt, and Peter L. Naismith at the company's office on the evening of 28th inst. and beg to report as follows:-

"His Worship the mayor explained that the object desired to be brought about by the interview was to settle definitely the future destiny of this property in the interests of the people of Lethbridge and signified the willingness of the council to undertake and provide for and to expend annually such sum of money as the finances of the city would allow for the purpose of maintaining, improving and beautifying the grounds.

"Mr. Galt, the president of the company, stated that it had from the first been his intention that this property should be kept undivided and intact as a breathing place for the citizens of the city and that at some time the reserve in the centre of 200 feet [61 m] square should become the site of a public building, worthy of the site, in the nature of a gift building with such approaches to and from it over the rest of the square as might be decided upon by the donor of the building.

"He stated, however, that it had not been his intention that title to the rest of the square should be vested in the city for some years to come. In fact, not until the population had been largely increased over what it is at present and the finances of the city had reached that stage when an annual expenditure upon the property would be warranted, which in extent would at this time seem large.

"Mr. Galt acknowledged, however, that he had been waited upon the evening before by Mr. Charles A. Magrath who had urged upon him so strongly the claims of the city that he was now willing at once to recommend to the trustees of the company that a deed of the public square, excepting thereout the 200 feet [61 m] square in the centre be now delivered to the city upon the following conditions:-

That the property be kept undivided and intact in perpetuity.

That the council of the city annually appropriate and expend such sum of money as the finances of the city from year to year will permit for the purpose of improving and beautifying the property by tree planting, lawn making and horticulture.

That the right of ingress and egress to and from the reserve in the centre over any part of the rest of the square be reserved. Said right of ingress and egress to be located and accepted by the city as the transferor may decide.

"All of which is respectfully submitted.

W. C. IVES,
Chairman, Special Committee"

"The Resolution"

"Moved by Alderman Ives, seconded by Alderman Macbeth, that the report of the special committee in reference to the acquisition of the public square be adopted as read, and that the council record its grateful appreciation to the offer of Mr. Galt and the AR&ICo and of the services rendered in the matter to the citizens of Lethbridge by C. A. Magrath.

"Be it further resolved that the council accept title to the public square, excepting thereout the reserve of 200 feet [61 m] square in the centre, upon the terms and conditions suggested by Mr. Galt and the officials of the company as outlined in the report of the special committee be hereby adopted.

"Be it further resolved that the city council make an annual expenditure and expend the same in improving and beautifying the property by way of tree planting, lawn making, and landscape gardening generally.

"All were in favor of the motion which settled the vexed question of the ownership of the square. The mayor expressed himself as being very proud, as a member of the council accomplishing what it had done.

"Ald. Ives was glad that the question of ownership had been settled but said that he hoped to live to see the square cut up, and that buildings should be on it anyway. By consent of the company, the words "in perpetuity" could be taken out of the conditions and he hoped to see the time when they could persuade Mr. Galt that it is in the city's interests to cut the square up and have buildings upon it."

Lethbridge Daily Herald 29 September 1908

"The Square"

"The Square is the city's again. For a long time we thought we owned it but early this year we were told otherwise and anxiety as to the ultimate ownership of this plot possessed us.

"It must be maintained as a park, says Mr. Galt. That is right. At present it is nothing more or less than an unsightly commons. The city should commence to improve the park without delay. Engage a landscape gardener to look it over and make recommendations as to the best way

to beautify it. It would not be necessary to carry out his suggestions in a year, but every cent that is expended year by year should be in accord with his plan, so that in time the design he prepares will be perfected.

"The Herald still clings to the view it has always held that the Square is the proper place for public buildings. The court house should have been located there, but that is out of the question now. However, the city hall, the post office, the public library and other public buildings that will sooner or later be built here, could not be located in a better place than the Square and as we have often said before, these buildings would in no way interfere with the Square as a park, in fact, they would improve its appearance.

"After our past experience it is to be sincerely hoped that the new title to the Square is absolutely clear."

Lethbridge Daily Herald 30 September 1908

Charles A. Magrath was lauded by council for the part he played in securing title to the square. His political opponent, Wm. A. Buchanan of the *Lethbridge Daily Herald*, felt Magrath should have been censured rather than praised for concealing such knowledge and said in a 9 October 1908 editorial, "The people of this city long believed that they owned the public square. They believed it during Mr. Magrath's term as land commissioner for the AR&ICo. The city from year to year spent money in planting trees and keeping up the walks. Would they have done this if they had the slightest idea that the square did not belong to them? Not a bit of it. It was a complete surprise to our citizens when it was learned we had not a title to that property."

The final chapters in the ownership story were written in 1910 and 1926. On 31 August 1910, the transfer became effective following approval by the remaining officials of the AR&ICo. On 7 September 1910 the mayor and secretary-treasurer of the city of Lethbridge were asked by the trustees of the AR&ICo to sign the agreement, which transferred the Square (called Galt Park after 18 October 1909) to the city except for the reserve in the centre. This action was formalized by the Alberta Legislature in "An Act to Provide for the Registration of a Certain Transfer from the Alberta Railway and Irrigation Company to the City of Lethbridge of the Land Known as "Galt Park." The act was assented to on 16 December 1910.

On 15 February 1926 council arranged with the Canadian Pacific Railway company (the CPR had bought out the AR&ICo in 1912) to sell city water to the company at a rate of nine cents per 1000 gallons [4546 L] for five years. In return, the CPR agreed to deed the central reserve in Galt Gardens (so-called after 31 March 1913) to the city without further cost. Title to the reserve was issued in the name of the city of Lethbridge on 7 September 1926.

BANDSTANDS AND BUILDINGS

The first structure on what we now call Galt Gardens Park [so-called after 8 December 1980] was a rough, raised, unpainted platform, which was used as a bandstand. Built of raw lumber and decorated with colored bunting while band concerts were in progress, the structure was located on the west side of the park, about 100 feet [30 m] inside its boundary, directly east of what is now 118-5th Street South. The structure shows up on 1890s photographs of the park and likely was constructed in the late 1880s.

Gradually improvements were made to the first bandstand. The building that resulted was called the publicity building and consisted by 19 April 1909 of an elevated bandstand with bell-shaped roof, which was reached by an outside curved staircase. It sat atop a single, glass-fronted room. The room was used to display samples of locally-grown grains and grasses as well as carefully chosen photographs of the region, and to distribute the wildly-optimistic promotional literature of the day. At the time these functions and the answering of letters of inquiry had been assumed on behalf of the city by the publicity committee of the Lethbridge Board of Trade [since 1947 the Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce]. Thus it was only a matter of a few weeks until council reached an agreement with the Board to take over the publicity building as the Board of Trade offices. On 5 September 1911, the attractive building was moved from its location near the Lethbridge Hotel to a location halfway along the north side of the park, about 100 yards [91 m] within the park boundary. Two wings were added at a cost of \$4,000 in June 1912 to give additional office and meeting space. There was some dissatisfaction with the site. A committee of the Board of Trade appeared before council on 23 December 1916 to request permission to move the publicity building/board offices from Galt Park to an unstated location elsewhere. No action was taken by council.

The building was heavily damaged by fire on 11 February 1922. However, the walls and roof were left largely intact and the building was repaired by midsummer at a cost of \$3,891.

In 1944, the Board of Trade decided that the time had come to move to new quarters. The Galt Gardens building had become increasingly isolated as the business district shifted south along 5th Street and 4th Avenue. Further, it had become a hangout for drunks and idlers, a fact that was often pointed out to Board canvassers when they appealed to local merchants for support of projects or for memberships. The upshot was that the Board offices were moved to the Mezzanine floor of the Marquis Hotel, effective 31 July 1944, and a secretary resigned.

On 25 September 1944, Walter Gurney applied to the city to lease the former Board of Trade building as a museum. His application was approved on 19 October and Gurney's Museum became a fixture in the city. In 1961 Gurney sold his collection of curios and oddities to Belmore Schultz of Milk River and closed the facility. The building was demolished on 28 August 1961.



Galt Gardens about 1920. The Artie Oil Refinery can be seen in the middle distance. The building in the park is the Board of Trade office and bandstand, later Gurney's Museum.

Circuses were permitted to be set up on the north end of the park around 1909, for example, the C. W. Parker Shows played Lethbridge on 12-16 July. A correspondent noted that heavy wagons drove over boulevards and grassed areas to deliver materials, circus animals and other equipment to the site. Earlier in the season council had refused to grant permission for C. J. Eckstorm of the Dallas Hotel to erect a large tent on the same location for the accommodation of homeless travellers. Council thought the Eckstorm tent was ugly.

For a brief period council permitted the erection in Galt Gardens of small buildings covered with gaudy advertising. A postcard shows one such building erected by the Becker and Yates Lumber Company in July 1918 at the place where the Cenotaph now stands. A letter from Francis J. Soares, an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company store, suggested with tongue in cheek that, "the city should build or allow to be built a dozen or more such buildings scattered all over the grounds and plastered on all sides with the very brightest colored signs."

A \$34,000 Carnegie Foundation-funded public library was built on a site in Galt Gardens opposite 6th Street South and was opened without fanfare in January 1922. There was some opposition to the choice of site although the more vocal arguments all involved sites in Galt Gardens: on the east side opposite 2nd Avenue, the site opposite 6th Street, and the southwest corner of 5th Street and 3rd Avenue South. The 6th Street and 3rd Avenue South site was chosen because it was readily accessible by street car from any part of the city.

An \$88,000 post-Second World War program of expansion of the public library was completed and the library reopened on 4 November 1951. Requests for additional space started almost immediately. However, it was not until 4 April 1974 that a new public library was opened on the southwest corner of 5th Avenue and Stafford Drive (9th Street) South on part of the old Central School grounds.

Cultural groups in the city began to promote the conversion of the old public library building in Galt Gardens into an art gallery. Others wanted the old building to be retained but to be converted into offices for the community services directorate, then badly scattered. Proponents of

the art gallery were able in less than a week to get 2,203 signatures on a petition of support. City council vacillated, first giving permission to community services to renovate the building and move in, then changing its collective mind and approving use of the building as an art gallery. By 9 August 1975 Allan MacKay had been hired as director/curator and the Southern Alberta Art Gallery was in operation, opening its doors to the public early in 1976.

On 3 January 1944, council was told by local womens' organizations that a comfort station should be established in the downtown area, preferably in Galt Gardens, with both a male and a female attendant on duty. The preferred location was on the northeast corner of 5th Street and 3rd Avenue South. On 20 November the city manager was instructed to go ahead with plans for the comfort station, which was built about half a block north of the original location. For some reason, the building of the comfort station did not arouse the usual Lethbridge passions and protests. In 1988, according to its infrequent visitors, the interior of the comfort station was a filthy, neglected horror.

In 1949, Alderman G. S. Lakie set off a local debate when he suggested that Galt Gardens should be liquidated by subdivision and turned into a business property. Fortunately the suggestion did not meet with general approval.

When the railways of Canada converted from steam to diesel in the 1950s, the Lethbridge branch of the CPR pensioners association decided to try and get one of the old steam locomotives for local display. The pensioners tried in vain to get a patch of CPR land near their clubrooms on which to display the old steamer but eventually had to place it in Galt Gardens instead.

The persons most responsible for securing the steam locomotive were Mayor Frank Sherring, of the City of Lethbridge, and Andrew Joseph Staysko, retired CPR locomotive engineer and a prominent member of the CPR pensioners association.

Staysko suggested to Sherring in 1963 that he write directly to N. R. (Buck) Crump, president of the CPR, and ask for one of the steam locomotives, then largely out of service and replaced by diesels. Crump arranged for Engine No. 3651, one of the surplus steam locomotives in the Winnipeg yards, to be deadheaded to Lethbridge at a cost of \$7,000. It cost about \$3,000 to move the engine to Galt Gardens and to prepare the site. Therefore, total cost of the project was \$10,000, mostly raised by public subscription in which the Lethbridge *Herald* played a prominent role.

In June 1964, CPR pensioners laid a temporary spur track from the CPR yards to a location on the north side of Galt Gardens where a concrete pad had been prepared to carry the old steam engine. A local trucking firm [Speedy Storage and Cartage Ltd.] hauled the engine over the temporary track.

City of Lethbridge parks department personnel were less than enthusiastic at having the locomotive placed in Galt Gardens, their attitude being that Galt Gardens was a park, not a depository for old locomotives of very little local

historical significance. However, the will of the mayor prevailed.

At first there was no protective fence around the locomotive. Also, the crew quarters doorway could be opened. Party-goers got into the habit of using the enclosed cab of the locomotive for drinking sessions. Local police had to check on such activity, which entailed climbing up a ladder in the dark of night to peer into the cab. The late Inspector Max Coupland, for one, always expected to get his head kicked off by some drunk each time he was forced to look over the edge. Eventually the cab door was welded shut and a high, chain link fence was built around the engine.

Periodically CPR pensioners agitated for a cover over the engine as it deteriorated rapidly when exposed to the elements. Costs ranged as high as \$60,000 and all requests were successfully resisted by city council.

According to Staysko, Engine No. 3651 had no particular historical significance as far as Lethbridge was concerned. It was first numbered No. 1851, then No. 2851, and finally No. 3651 when it was placed in the 3600 series because of mechanical alterations. As No. 1851, Staysko informed me, it was used as a pusher engine in the Connaught Tunnel, west of Banff. On one occasion it blew up and the fireman (name unknown) and Engineer Holliday were killed. It was hauled east and repaired in the Montreal CPR shops, emerging as No. 2851.

However, a teacher at the Lethbridge Community College and a very knowledgeable railroad "buff" says it was of local historical significance. He suggested that it was used in the Crowsnest Pass and was often in and out of Lethbridge.

The engine was moved from Galt Gardens Park to the new Health Unit quarters in the refurbished CPR Station in 1987.

Various buildings and other facilities were proposed for Galt park over the years but, because of public opposition or for other reasons, with one exception were never started. These included a theatre in 1907, a courthouse in 1908, a post office in 1910, a city hall in 1913, a war memorial in 1921, a wading pool in 1944, a memorial centre in 1961, a museum/archives in 1961, an expansion of the crowded library facility in 1965, several proposals from downtown businessmen for paved parking lots in the late 1960s, a glassed-in Devonian Garden-like facility in 1986, and an underground parking facility in 1988. (A war memorial was unveiled there in 1931. Sod was actually stripped from the library expansion site in 1965 before a public outcry stopped further construction.)

On 11 May 1964, in response to mounting public pressure, council approved a motion, as follows:

1. "That Galt Gardens shall remain as an open space, in order to preserve an area of historic importance and to safeguard its special importance, an eventual redevelopment as a downtown square, and as an item of scenic attraction adjacent to a main route through the City."
2. "That the erection of any further buildings in the Park shall be avoided."

LANDSCAPING

Over the 103 years of its existence, Galt Gardens Park has evolved from an expanse of native prairie to a civic playground, a meeting place, an ornamental park, and finally to a sedentary sitting-down type of park. In 1988, it was undergoing still another major change in use, the type and direction of which was difficult to discern.

When Montague Aldous in February-March 1885 surveyed the ten-acre [4.05-ha] area, its cover consisted mostly of blue grama *Bouteloua gracilis* and fringed sage *Artemisia frigida*. This is the vegetation type called by modern environmentalists "Shortgrass Prairie," but classed nowadays as poor condition Mixed Prairie. Other prairie species that would have been present include needle-and-thread *Stipa comata*, western wheatgrass *Agropyron smithii*, June grass, *Koeleria cristata*, Sandberg's bluegrass *Poa secunda*, pin cushion cactus *Mamillaria vivipara*, winterfat *Eurotia lanata*, and a variety of forbs. Native vegetation cannot withstand much "wear" so we may assume that the feet of cricketers, ballplayers and their fans soon created much bare ground.

The soil of Galt Gardens Park was a calcareous Orthic Dark Brown Chernozem developed on clay-loam alluvial-lacustrine parent material. Irrigated since 1901, its profile characteristics have probably changed in the direction of a Shallow Black soil of the moister Foothills region. This has happened elsewhere in the irrigated district and is caused by the vastly increased amounts of organic matter added to the soil in the form of grass roots. An exception is those park areas under trees that receive a lot of leaf fall. In these places the soil profile has likely developed some of the characteristics of a Grey Luvisol, a forest soil.

Interest in tree planting began with a visit from William Saunders of the Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa, on 27 October 1890. The Board of Trade wanted a tree farm to be established in the area. Saunders was not impressed with that idea but did offer to supply 300 to 400 trees to plant around the Square. Responsibility for planting of trees on the Square was formally assigned to the Board of Trade by Council on 1 May 1891. However, Board of Trade members voted against taking any action until an assured source of water to care for trees could be obtained.

An assured source of water became available on 4 September 1900 when irrigation first reached Lethbridge. Ditches were constructed throughout the town and trees were planted in two neat but monotonous rows around the periphery of the park in 1901.

Nevertheless, in spite of tree-planting, fencing, construction of cinder pathways and probably some seeding of grasses, the property was described as "an unsightly commons" as late as September 1909.

The first real attempt at landscaping took place in 1910. Alderman George Merrick Hatch was chairman of the parks committee. He enlisted the help of William Harmon Fairfield, then superintendent of the Lethbridge Experimental Station and looked upon as an "encyclopedia" of local horticultural knowledge. It is likely that Fairfield drew up the plan of improvements eventually adopted for the park.

Here is the first plan:

"Galt Square Torn Up"

"The parks and boulevard committee is getting ready to put into effect the plan of improvements on the Galt square as authorized by the council in accordance with the terms stipulated by the donor, Mr. E. T. Galt, in the deed of gift.

"The plan adopted is that suggested by George M. Hatch, chairman of the parks committee. It provides for a square in the centre 200 feet by 200 feet [61 x 61-m], in which, at present, will be placed a fountain. Around the square will be a 40-foot [12-m] roadway with roadways the same width running from it at each corner of the whole park. Opposite Crabb Street [6th Street South] on the Redpath Street [3rd Avenue South] side and opposite Ford Street [2nd Avenue South] on the Round Street [5th Street South] and Glyn Street [7th Street South] sides as well as from the middle of the Baroness Road [1st Avenue South] side of the square 20-foot [6.0-m] lanes will run to the centre. The central square will be grassed and other spaces will be planted with trees and shrubs. Four hydrants are to be placed on the square, the pipes for which are ordered. As soon as these are in, the whole square will be broken up like a wheat field, kept watered from the hydrants sufficiently to lay the dust, and the roads put in and the shrubberies and central plot and fountain laid out."

Lethbridge Daily Herald 26 April 1910

Help in park maintenance was received from local fireman. The first professional fire chief, Thomas Peter Kilkenny, introduced regular practices to train both horses and men. Some practice sessions were combined with civic duties such as watering Galt Gardens or suppressing dust by watering busy streets.

The park gradually took on the air of a formal garden. By the late-1920s Galt Gardens looked as attractive as it ever has, before or since! We get a glimpse of its appearance in this news report:

**"Galt Gardens Present Picture Of Rich Beauty
Will be at their best for Vice-regal visit on Thursday next"**

"Like all the gardens of the city, Galt Gardens have been backward this season owing to the cold nights, but with the present showing the Gardens are making up for the setback caused by the weather and are keeping their reputation.

"At no time has the foliage of the Gardens looked so well as at present following the rain. The silver fork-leaved beeches are looking exceedingly well. The peonies presented by the Prince of Wales [the Prince visited Lethbridge in 1919], which were placed in the Gardens showed very well for the first year and look very promising for a profusion of bloom next season.

"A nice border of harebells gives the Gardens a very attractive appearance on the east side, and Superintendent John Laing intends to extend it. Robins sunning themselves on the lawns, which are looking exceedingly well, and the floral beauty which the Gardens are attaining after a late season, present the attraction they have become. The Gardens as they are will make a fine setting for

the program to be gone through there when the Governor-General and Lady Willingdon visit the city Thursday [12 July 1928]."

Lethbridge Daily Herald 9 July 1928.

Photographs of Galt Gardens in the late 1920s show masses of gladiolus and banks of peonies, as well as rows and beds and borders of flowers of many other kinds. It all represented a tremendous amount of hand labor, the cost of which would be prohibitive today.

A feature of this era was the planting of pictorial floral beds. One of these was a floral Union Jack planted about 1928 in a 30 x 40-foot [9.1 x 12.2 m] bed in the northeast corner of Galt Gardens. It was protected by a wire mesh fence as it was on the direct route from the CPR station to downtown and would have been viewed by thousands of visitors. A smaller floral Union Jack was featured in the Gardens during the Great War years.



Galt Gardens about 1913, looking toward the corner of 3rd Avenue and 7th Street South

During the 1930s, the city of Lethbridge had priorities other than the beautification of Galt Gardens. An annual average of 2,000 wage-earners were on relief throughout the period at a total cost to the city of about \$750,000. Nevertheless, the Garden retained its beauty, as the following news report will show:

"Lovely Galt Gardens

Tourists from Distant Places Halt to Admire City's Central Park. Few Citizens Enjoy Beauty Spot."

"Tribute to the vision of Lethbridge's city fathers who created a garden beauty spot in the centre of the business district many years ago, is paid almost daily during the summer months by visitors, many of them from distant points. Fame of Galt Gardens has spread to all parts of North America and seldom does a day go by without at least one party of tourists visiting the park of which they have heard from their friends.

"On Wednesday of this week four parties—complete strangers—met in Galt Gardens and exclaimed about the floral beauty of it. The motorists were from Winnipeg, North Dakota, Oregon and Illinois, respectively.

"The Winnipeg man, a commercial traveller making his first visit here, remarked that he had often heard of Galt Gardens and had determined to visit it before he left. He was amazed at the floral beauty created and planned to advertise its loveliness to friends.

"The Oregon people had visited Vancouver, Edmonton, Banff and Calgary since leaving home. They declared Galt Gardens was the loveliest spot they had seen on their trip. They remarked on the spaciousness of the grounds and the splendid manner in which they were kept up.

"Members of the gardening staff, accustomed to meeting travellers from many points in the garden daily, frequently comment to the *Herald* on the comparatively few Lethbridge citizens who visit the park. Jobless men make the Garden their headquarters but few indeed are the Lethbridge citizens generally who call to admire the park.

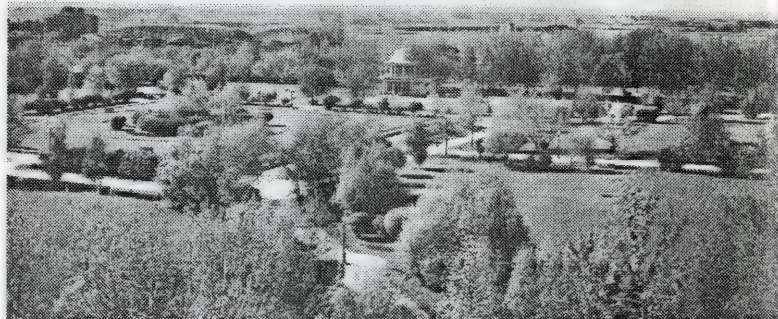
"It is a shame," say the gardeners, "that Lethbridge people do not appreciate their park as much as the outsiders."

The Lethbridge Herald July 1937

The Second World War brought its problems, not the least of them an acute shortage of manpower, and the city parks program tended to be neglected.

By 5 July 1956 caragana hedges were being removed from around and throughout Galt Gardens, the cleared areas being seeded to Kentucky bluegrass. The intent of this program was to clear out the underbrush, which caught blowing paper and other debris, and to provide an unobstructed view across the park. This was of considerable value to the police as anti-social behavior, later to become commonplace, was just beginning in the late 1950s.

Anti-social behavior was not brought officially to city council's attention until 26 July 1965, when it was reported that Galt Gardens were being used by transients. There was much litter, considerable drunkenness, panhandling and begging. Council members called for a by-law to stop it.



Galt Gardens around 1920, the photo taken from the top of the Sherlock Block at the corner of 3rd Avenue and 7th Street South.

This behavior, which was never as bad as was portrayed in sensationalized feature articles and in Letters to the Editor, has continued. There is no doubt that, in the past decade or so, the public perception of the park was such that people simply stayed away from the place. The more obvious nuisances were soon picked up by the police and, for a time at least, tended to be heavily fined or jailed upon a court appearance the next day. These penalties seem to have been eased in recent years as the realization has grown that anti-social behavior in Galt Gardens Park is simply a manifestation of much greater social problems elsewhere.

THE CENOTAPH IN GALT GARDENS PARK

On 4 August 1914, yet another of Europe's 1,400 demented wars began. Known to history as the Great War of 1914-1918, it became the most important event in Canada in this century.

But, initially, it developed a life of its own and became the world's first industrialized war, a vast slaughterhouse made possible by the railroad and the machine gun, in which men were killed almost as fast as their replacements could be brought up. The average survival time of all front line troops was 23 days. Men died at random, amid unimaginable horrors: 59 percent from shellfire, 38 percent from bullets. Canadian casualties totalled 66,651 dead, 155,799 wounded, the greatest proportional sacrifice of any combatant nation.

Throughout much of our history, Canada's school system taught, and Canada's social system emphasized, loyalty to the British flag, to the British King or Queen, and to the British Empire. Membership in the British Empire gave English-speaking Canadians their sense of identity, particularly of an identity distinct from the United States. Since the collapse of the British Empire in the 1950s, English-speaking Canadians have floundered, trying in vain to develop a new sense of national identity and purpose.

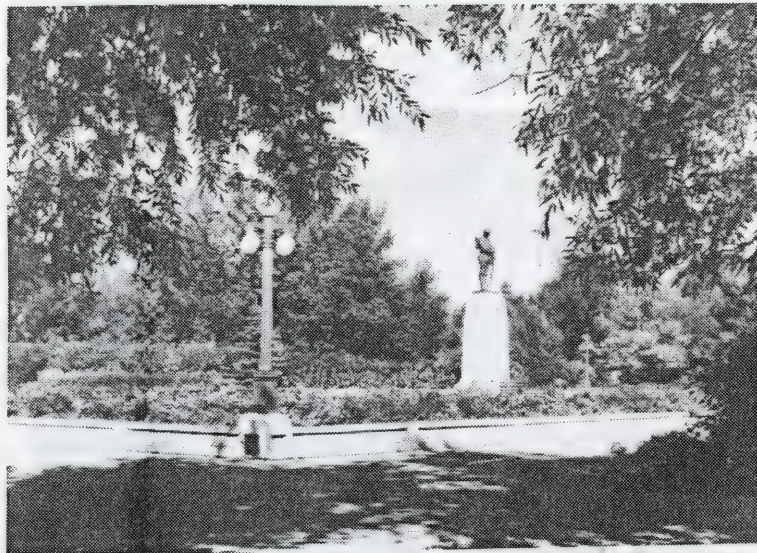
But in 1914 English-speaking Canadian had no doubts. When Britain declared war on Germany, Canada declared war also. Few English-speaking Canadians would have had it any other way. On 4 August people were infused with the spirit of festival. Young men rushed to enlist and recruiting officers could hardly keep up with the queues that formed outside their offices. In Lethbridge by November 1916, 1,875 officers and men had joined the armed forces from a population of 9,436, the highest percentage of enlistments in Canada. In all, about 2,600 enlisted from Lethbridge; 261 died in action. Many more had their lives significantly shortened, for example, 27-year old William Staysko, gassed at Ypres in 1915, who died in a southern Alberta sanatorium in 1919.

Civil War monuments dominate in American cities. In Canadian cities, towns and villages, it is memorials to the Great War of 1914-1918. They stand in public squares and parks or in front of Legion halls, columns and shafts and bases bearing soldiers militant, with bayonets levelled forever against some unseen foe; soldiers in extremis, struggling through mortal grief and danger; and soldiers pensive and at rest, the horrors at last behind them.

The memorials all have inscribed upon them long lists of names (237 at Medicine Hat, 261 at Lethbridge) and of battles fought (Arras, Amiens, Courcelette, Canal du Nord, Cambrai, Festubert, Hill Sixty, Hill Seventy, Lens, Loos, Mons, Passchendaele, Sanctuary Wood, Somme, St. Eloi, St. Julien, Ypres, and Vimy). There is always Vimy—Vimy Ridge—Canada's greatest victory in the Great War where, in April 1917, some 8,000 Canadians died with the result that, in the peace, Canada was able to throw off the bonds of a colonial past to become a nation.

The Great War affected Canadian politics. Because the Conservatives under Sir Robert Borden in 1917 forced conscription upon Quebec, the party became anathema there.

Thus the Great War of 1914-1918 forced Canada into a new maturity. It bred our first sense of national spirit even as conscription emphasized our linguistic and cultural differences. In spite of the appalling losses, the war was a major step in our moving from colonialism to nationhood.



Cenotaph about 1935

The Cenotaph in Galt Gardens Park recalls the futility and the sacrifice, the hysteria and the heroism of the Great War years. Local politicians have learned that they interfere with it at their peril. Sculptured by Coeur de Leon McCarthy of Montreal, it was unveiled on 7 June 1931. It cost \$10,232, of which \$8,500 went to the sculptor, all raised by public subscription. The memorial embodies a statue of a Canadian soldier, surmounting a pedestal, the whole attaining a height of 23 feet [7.0 m].

The pedestal is of selected granite quarried at Granite Island, Vancouver. It measures three feet [0.9 m] square at the cap, on the face of which is a bronze wreath of maple leaves and poppies. It descends through the die, sub-base and base moulding to six feet [1.8 m] square, all placed on two base-steps of twelve feet [3.6 m] and fourteen feet [4.3 m] square, respectively. Total height is fourteen feet [4.3 m].

The die is one solid block measuring four feet [1.2 m] square at the top joint, spreading to four feet six inches [1.4 m] at the bottom joint, and is five feet six inches [1.7 m] high. On the front face in three-inch [7.6 cm] high letters are the inscriptions: "In Honour Of Those Whose Names Endure," "The Great War 1914-1918," and "They Have Passed On Leaving The Heritage Of A Glorious Memory." On the back in two and one-half-inch [6.3 cm] letters are the names of battles in which the men of Lethbridge and district fought and died. The names of the fallen are in one and one-quarter-inch [3.2 cm] letters on two sides.

On the front of the sub-base are the words, "Erected by the citizens of Lethbridge and District." All the lettering on the monument was cut into the stone and painted black.

The foundation is of solid concrete, fourteen feet square [4.3 m] and seven feet [2.1 m] deep.

The statue is of a Canadian soldier cast in bronze in full marching order, standing with arms reversed. It measures nine feet [2.7 m] high at the plinth.

On 7 June 1931, the memorial was dedicated by the Right Reverend L. Ralph Sherman, Lord Bishop of Calgary. It was unveiled by Lieutenant-Governor William Legh Walsh. General chairman George E. A. Rice of the memorial committee transferred title to Mayor Robert Barrowman, acting on behalf of the city of Lethbridge. The ceremony was held in brilliant sunshine, in the presence of a huge gathering of people of Lethbridge and district, the veterans massed in two solid bodies facing the war memorial with the local militia as a guard of honor.

It took a long time after the ending of the Great War to bring all of this to fruition.

A war memorial was discussed in Lethbridge as early as 1918. Reference to a memorial first appeared in city minutes on 2 May 1921 when council decided to continue to permit "tagging" as long as the money was used for such things as the war memorial. A committee, the war memorial committee, was set up; one of its first tasks was to ask the mayor to negotiate with the CPR to obtain the central reserve in Galt Gardens as a site for the monument. On 29 August, the CPR refused the city's request.

Nevertheless, designs were drawn up in the expectation that, sooner or later, the CPR would relent. One design proposed in 1921 featured a Frank Slide boulder, measuring 10 x 10 x 10 feet [3.0 x 3.0 x 3.0 m], to be mounted on a concrete base. There were to be bronze inscription plates on each side with the names of the fallen and of the places where they fell. The whole was to be surmounted by figures representing Canada and Great Britain. Captured German field guns at each of the four corners completed the design.

Little more was heard of the war memorial until 1922, when the Independent Order Daughters of the Empire [IODE] volunteered to take on the war memorial project on behalf of the city. In 1924, Dr. J. S. Stewart was again in touch with the CPR and was still trying to get the raised central reserve for a war memorial site.

By 28 July 1927 the war memorial committee had collected all but about \$1,500 of the \$10,250 required. The order for the statue and pedestal was placed with sculptor Coeur de Leon McCarthy in Montreal. A news item of 22 September 1928 read, "The site on which the war memorial is to be erected in Galt Gardens has now been staked and the excavation made. The memorial will occupy the south part of the central square. The centre portion of the Gardens will not be disturbed. A small portion of the hedge will have to be grooved out to make room for the memorial. Great disappointment is felt by the committee that the memorial cannot be unveiled on Armistice Day, as they were led to believe, but the matter is in the hands of the sculptor. He has guaranteed that the memorial will be in place by December."

The memorial was not in place by December 1928. By October 1930 council, which had loaned the war memorial

committee \$1,500, was concerned at the lack of action. George E. A. Rice and Judge J. A. Jackson appeared before council on 27 October to explain. "Mr. Rice gave a verbal statement of the situation. Owing to the difficulty of obtaining the necessary bronze wreath the memorial committee has decided to wait until November when, if no satisfactory arrangements can be made with the sculptor, they will make other arrangements for obtaining a wreath in readiness for unveiling in the summer of 1931 and find means to meet the loan of \$1,500."

There is a monument to those who fought and died in the Second World War and the Korean Conflict, but it is simply a part of the Great War memorial.

During and immediately after the First World War, the Allies were so afraid of Germany under the Kaiser that they insisted on a policy of total surrender and punitive reparations. It was this policy, as much as anything else, that contributed quite unintentionally to worldwide economic depression and to the rise of even more alarming and formidable political movements: Communism in the Soviet Union, Nazism in Germany, and Fascism in Italy. Thus the Second World War grew out of the carnage of the First.

About 44,000 Canadians died in the Second World War, about 10,000 of them aircrew. Except for the Dieppe Raid, the reckless disregard for human life seen in all senior military officers in the First World War was seen mostly in senior Air Force officers in the Second World War. One hundred and twenty two of the dead came from Lethbridge and district.

The Korean Conflict began on 25 June 1950, when the North Koreans launched an attack over the 38th Parallel into South Korea. On 30 June, Canada dispatched three destroyers for duty off Korea, and on 7 August, a Canadian Expeditionary Force under Brigadier John Rockingham of Vancouver was organized. A cease-fire was declared on 27 July 1953. About 25,000 Canadians served in Korea; 516 died in action. Probably no more than 15 or 20 enlisted from Lethbridge but this is only a guess. Many Korean vets came here after the fact.

On 5 March 1956, a delegation of the Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans' Club approached council with the request that they be allowed to add to the war memorial in Galt Gardens to commemorate the veterans of the Second World War and the Korean Conflict. There was discussion among councillors in regard to moving the Cenotaph from Galt Gardens to a site in front of the building we know as Old City Hall, fortunately without action. The AN&AF Veterans received permission to go ahead with the new monument, presumably in cooperation with the General Stewart Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion.

The base of the Great War memorial was extended lengthwise. Two granite slabs were placed so as to flank the monument on the east and west. These slabs measure six feet [1.8 m] by five feet [1.5 m] and are about one foot [0.3 m] thick. Inscribed on the stone are the words, "Lest We Forget," and "To The Glory Of God And In Memory Of Those Who Fell During World War II And The Korean War." Below this inscription are 122 names of the dead, 68 on the west slab, 54 on the east.

HISTORICAL MARKERS

By 1982, the war memorial in Galt Gardens Park had acquired a patina of grime and the lettering had faded. On 17 November, the Legion's Lethbridge Veterans' Field of Honor committee offered to put up half the cost of refurbishing and refacing the monument, provided the community services directorate of the city of Lethbridge would put up the other half. Tenders were called, the successful bidder being Lethbridge Monumental and Tile Works, Limited, with a bid of \$23,482. The refacing and relettering were done by Fairmont Granite Limited, Beebe, Quebec. The monument was returned and put back in place in June 1983. The city paid \$11,750 as its share of the project. The General Stewart Branch No. 4 of the Royal Canadian Legion paid the rest.

There is no monument in Lethbridge to honor the veterans of the Boer War, also known as the South African War (1899-1902). Canada sent volunteers, among them on 11 January 1900 a contingent of 20 from Lethbridge. There were individual enlistments of local men, for example, Charles John Ross, the first town policeman, who won the DSO and was discharged a lieutenant-colonel. Many Boer War veterans came to Lethbridge after the fact, among them Brigadier-General John Smith Stewart, Lethbridge's highest-ranking officer in the Great War who was a trooper under Col. Sam Steele in South Africa, and Michael John Bennett, who was an NCO with a British unit and who became one of the last Canadian survivors of the war, dying at the age of 101 in 1983.

Nor is there a monument to the members of the North-West Mounted Police and others who were sent from Lethbridge to fight in the Riel or North-West Rebellion of 1885. Loss of life was minimal but the political legacy was great. Louis Riel, now acknowledged to be a Canadian patriot, was allowed by Sir John A. Macdonald's Conservative government to go to the gallows to appease Orange Ontario. Quebec has never forgotten.

Thus the Cenotaph in Galt Gardens Park, its sad list of the names of the dead of the Great War dwarfing the additions from subsequent conflicts, symbolizes the sacrifice as well as the futility, the heroism as well as the horror of war. It serves to remind us of Lethbridge's participation in the Riel Rebellion of 1885, the Boer War of 1899-1902, the Great War of 1914-1918, the Second World War of 1939-1945, the Korean Conflict of 1950-1953, and the various peace-keeping missions in the world's hotspots in recent decades. It was built and is revered by Lethbridgeans out of an instinctive knowledge that it was and is important for them, and for those who came after, to remember what happened in their time.

Lethbridge citizens have always welcomed the placement in Galt Gardens Park of significant historical markers. It was a logical place to put them although historical markers generally are found scattered throughout the city.

The first historical marker in Galt Gardens commemorated our coal pioneers, more specifically the first commercial coal miner in Alberta, Nicholas Sheran. The day of the unveiling was designated "Sheran Memorial Day."



Speakers podium, made of solid coal, at the 18 July 1928 unveiling of the Sheran marker.

Thus, on Wednesday, 18 July 1928, a National Sites and Monuments cairn to commemorate Nicholas Sheran and Alberta's coal pioneers was unveiled in Galt Gardens. It was the culmination of a year of planning by the Sheran memorial committee of the Lethbridge Historical Society, made up of C. J. Broderick, chairman; F. W. Downer, C. S. Donaldson, G. N. Houston, Robert Livingstone, M. E. Jackson, and D. H. Quigley of Coalhurst. Regrets were received from many prominent Canadians, an example being this one from Colonel John Stoughton Dennis, then chief of the CPR Department of Natural Resources, who wired: "Regret unable attend ceremony on 18th. I visited and had dinner with Nick Sheran October 1879 on my way from Territories to Fort Benton."

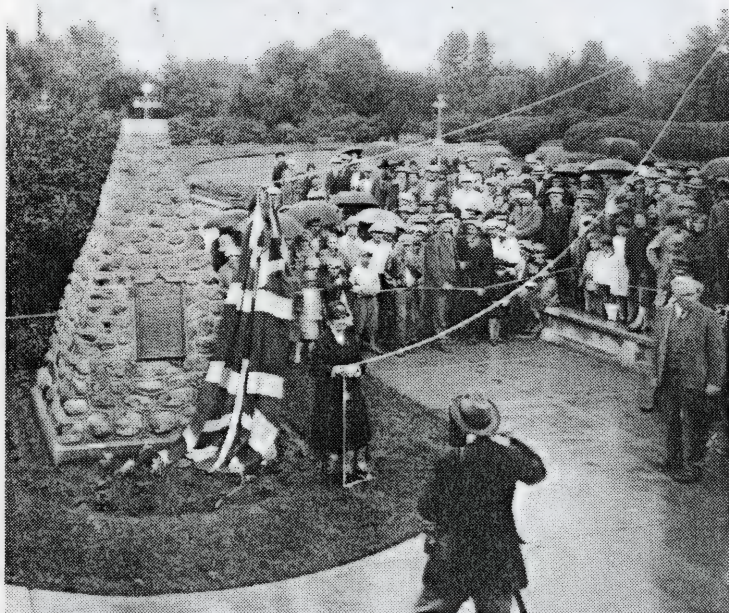
The day began with a program at the speaking rostrum [which was made of solid coal] on Seventh Street near the old AR&ICo building [now the Downtown Safeway Store lot]. It was followed by an unveiling ceremony at the cairn. Mrs. Kate Sheran, listed as the sister-in-law of Nicholas Sheran but actually the widow of a cousin, officiated. Next a tea was held on the mezzanine floor of the Marquis Hotel to honor local pioneer women of the 1880s. The day's events continued with the Sheran

memorial banquet at the Marquis Hotel. Speakers were Hon. Charles Stewart, minister of the interior, Senator W. A. Buchanan, publisher of the Lethbridge Herald, and Dr. J. A. Allan, professor of geology at the University of Alberta. Finally a dance was held at the Lethbridge Arena [which was destroyed by fire on 12 March 1971] under the auspices of the Sheran memorial committee. Proceeds of the dance went to charitable organizations in the city.

Nicholas Sheran was credited with opening the first commercial coal mine in Alberta, and possibly the first such mine west of the Great Lakes. The year of his arrival was given as 1870 but we now know that it was 1874. Marcella Sheran shared the honors with her famous brother. She was supposed to have arrived in the region in 1872 although it was more likely in 1877. She married Joseph McFarland, a rancher near Fort Macleod, on 4 July 1878.

A special issue of the Lethbridge *Daily Herald*, the ten-page *Alberta Coal Number*, was printed. A poem, "The Coal Pioneers," was written for the occasion by Eric Muncaster.

The original monument deteriorated badly over time and was replaced by Parks Canada in the 1970s with a granite slab. The original marker was demolished and the new marker was moved from its location on the east side of the central reserve in Galt Gardens to a new location on the south side where it now flanks the Cenotaph on the east.



Mrs. Kate Sheran unveiling the Nicholas Sheran marker in Galt Gardens on 18 July 1928.

Unfortunately, when the Sheran cairn was moved the same wording that had appeared on the 1928 plaque was reused on the new bilingual marker. Mistakes were perpetuated: that Sheran opened his mine in 1872 [it was 1874], that Sheran's mine was the first coal mine in Alberta [it was the first commercial coal mine], that Sheran hauled his coal in his own bull train to Benton and Macleod [Sheran owned neither oxen nor wagons; the coal was picked up by supply trains returning empty to Fort Benton or by North-West Mounted Police work parties with wagons from Fort Macleod].

An important marker was erected in Galt Gardens in July 1928 when Canada's Geodetic Survey erected a monument there. The 26 July 1928 Lethbridge *Daily Herald* news report of the event read:

"The geodetic survey, a branch of the federal department of the interior, has constructed a fundamental bench mark monument [B. M. No. 814 C] in Galt Gardens with the permission and co-operation of city authorities. These permanent survey reference points are being established in the principal cities and towns in Alberta and Lethbridge was selected as one of the places in which it was desirable to place such a pier.

"The elevation of this monument is being determined by precise levelling for the future use of surveyors and engineers in initiating local surveys of all kinds and for all purposes. [The elevation was determined to be 3,000 feet [914 m] above sea level although no elevation is shown on the small copper plaque inset for the purpose.] The monument is built of concrete, reinforced with steel to a concrete base six feet [1.83 m] in diameter which is placed below the frost line. The tapered pier extends one foot [0.3 m] above the ground surface and bears a small circular bronze tablet in its top. A similar tablet is also placed in the base and is accessible by means of a hollow tile pipe placed vertically over it. This lower reference point may be used should the upper mark be destroyed.

"The monument [which is located in the southeastern corner of the park] has been constructed in Galt Gardens for the reason that there is little likelihood of it being disturbed by building operations or city planning schemes in the future."

On 7 August 1966, another Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada marker was unveiled in Galt Gardens. The project was initiated by the sites and monuments committee of the Lethbridge Historical Society. The marker commemorated Captain Ernest C. Hoy, D.F.C., then living in the State of Georgia but present for the ceremony. As a member of the Royal Flying Corps in the Great War of 1914-1918, he destroyed six German aircraft and an enemy balloon. He is best remembered for his trail-breaking flight across the Canadian portion of the Rocky Mountains on 7 August 1919.

The flight was financed by The Lethbridge *Herald*, The Calgary *Herald*, The Vancouver *Daily World*, the Town of Golden, B. C., and the Aerial League of Canada.

During the 7 August flight, the spare cockpit of the two-seater biplane, a Curtiss JN-4, held an additional fuel supply to ensure adequate flying time. It limited Hoy to 7,000 feet [2133 m] flying attitude. Captain Hoy followed a zig-zag course through mountain passes, often barely able to lift the heavily laden machine over heights of land. Vicious air currents plagued him most of the way. But by 6:22 p.m. he landed at Lethbridge and completed the first flight over the Canadian Rockies. He pioneered the route to be followed from the 1930s to the 1960s by commercial aircraft.

Captain Hoy carried letters, newspapers and civic greetings from Vancouver to points along the route. He demonstrated the way in which the aeroplane could reduce

travel time and showed the commercial possibilities of aerial transportation.

Walter R. (Stubb) Ross, then of the Lethbridge Flying Club, spoke briefly. At the time, Ross was trying to establish a small feeder airline later to be called TIME AIR.

A marker, consisting of a large granite boulder with attached plaque, was erected in 1959 in Galt Gardens on Third Avenue just east of the present Southern Alberta Art Gallery. Sponsors were the Rotary Club of Lethbridge and the 23rd Technical Squadron, Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, the latter involved in moving the huge prairie boulder to the site. The wording on the plaque is:

"Galt Gardens"

"Sir Alexander Tilloch Galt, founder of Lethbridge, set this site aside as a square when the townsite was first surveyed in 1885.

"As the centre of the new community of Lethbridge, the square was first used by the wagon trains that carried coal from Lethbridge to Fort Benton, Montana, and Fort Macleod. Later it was used as a playing field for soccer, lacrosse, and baseball. Citizens of Lethbridge planted trees around it, watering them by means of the first irrigation system, which was completed in 1900.

"In 1909 the Alberta Railway and Irrigation Company deeded the square to the city on condition that it be maintained as a public park.

"Erected 1959 by

The Rotary Club, Lethbridge, and R. C. E. M. E. 23 Tec. Sqn.

MODERN TIMES

Galt Gardens Park, the only significant downtown open space in Lethbridge, has been featured to a greater or lesser extent in all redevelopment plans of that part of the city. The strengthening of the downtown core has been a major principle of municipal policy since the 1950s and has underlain all of the following studies: the urban renewal study (1965-1966); the downtown redevelopment scheme Phase 1 (1972) and Phase 11 (1975); the railway relocation scheme (1977); the downtown Phase 11 area redevelopment plan (1979); the City Of Lethbridge general municipal plan (1980); the railway relocation lands area redevelopment plan (1983); the Central Business District CentreSite Lethbridge [CBD CSL] planning and development study (1985); and the downtown area redevelopment plan (1988).

A brief description of several of these studies follows:

1/ The urban renewal study (1965-66) and downtown development scheme Phase 1 (1972-75): Upgrading of this area resulted in the Lethbridge Centre, which opened in 1975, and provincial government office complex, which opened in 1976.

2/ Downtown development scheme Phase 11 (1976-80):

Significant redevelopment potential still exists in this area but the Lethbridge Lodge hotel, provincial courthouse, and two business blocks have been completed.

3/ City of Lethbridge general municipal plan. The intent of this study was to maintain downtown Lethbridge as the commercial centre of the region and to develop a multi-purpose downtown area.

4/ Railway relocation lands area redevelopment plan. The CPR marshalling yards were moved to Kipp as a result of work first envisaged in 1970 and made possible by 1974 federal legislation. This plan, adopted by by-law 3899 in July 1983, established a scheme to develop 33.9 ha of land, called CentreSite, vacated by the railroad.

5/ CBD CSL planning and development study (1985). Part of this study addressed the importance of establishing strong visual and pedestrian links between potential developments in the CentreSite location and the existing downtown, developing more intensive activities in Galt Gardens Park, and providing conveniently accessible parking. This has since become even more important with the completion of Cadillac Fairview's Park Place shopping mall, anchored by Eaton's and Sears Canada Inc. stores.

6/ Needs identified in the 1988 downtown area redevelopment plan were to develop a streetscape designed to link Galt Gardens with the rest of downtown. Specifically, the objective proposed for Galt Gardens was: "to create a strong, identifiable heart in downtown which offers a unique urban experience and symbolizes the character of Lethbridge."

James Stendebach, Southwest Land Planning consultant, pointed out about 1986 how the CentreSite development would place Galt Gardens Park in the middle of the downtown retail core and thus enhance the park's importance. He suggested a visual link by means of wide walk-ways north-south through the park along an extension of 6th Street South. Removal of the Art Gallery and the locomotive display would be desirable, he thought.

On 7 June 1988, Reid Crowther consultants submitted plans for a 5th Street transit mall (a major downtown bus stop and transfer point) and an 285-stall underground parking structure in the southwest corner of Galt Gardens Park. The development of the proposed parking structure aroused much controversy and was finally abandoned by council.

On 12 May 1969, underground parking at Galt Gardens was recommended to council. The City Solicitor was asked for his opinion as to the feasibility of creating such underground parking without defacing or harming the park area itself.

Here is a description of the underground parking facility, adapted from the Reid Crowther report:

"The recommended parking structure is a three-module, two-level structure located in the southwest corner of Galt Gardens with a capacity of 285 stalls. The location will not impact the Art Gallery or Cenotaph. Outside dimensions are approximately 52 m by 90 m. The structure will be ventilated and heated. A sprinkler system as well as chemical fire extinguishers will be provided. The lighting system will promote safe and efficient movement of motor vehicles and pedestrians,

"Entrance to and exit from the structure will be via a single ramp between the Art Gallery and the parking structure using the 6th Street and 3rd Avenue intersection. Two pedestrian exits will be provided, one at the corner of 3rd Avenue and 5th Street, the other adjacent to the ramp near 6th Street. Landscaping will complement the 5th Street and 1st Avenue South streetscapes and will restore the former park setting."

Release of the Reid Crowther report unleashed a storm of protest. The Lest We Forget Committee was organized to protect the Cenotaph but its name was changed to The Coalition Committee to Save Galt Gardens and its objectives broadened in August 1988. In excess of 4,000 Lethbridgeans signed a petition of protest, which was circulated by the committee. Meanwhile, a parking survey undertaken by the Mayor revealed surprisingly little support among downtown businessmen for the Galt Gardens Park parking project. On 19 August 1988, council passed two resolutions, which read as follows:

1. "That letter from J. F. Emery, chairman, Coalition Committee to Save Galt Gardens, dated August 10, requesting the opportunity to address City Council regarding the underground parking and transit terminal planned for Galt Gardens, be filed and further that the administration be directed to review the positive and negative aspects of Historic Site designation." [Emery's committee had suggested that Galt Gardens Park be designated a Provincial Historic Resource and had submitted appropriate documentation.]

2. "That letter from Mayor Carpenter, dated August 9, expressing his views on the matter of parking in the downtown and advising that he conducted a survey by mail of the members of the Downtown Business Revitalization Zone to ascertain their position on the following three questions:

I am in favor of constructing an underground parkade in the SW corner of Galt Gardens. Yes? No?

I am in favor of the City of Lethbridge constructing an aboveground parkade at another downtown location. Yes? No?

I am not in favor of constructing additional parking facilities. Yes? No?

and presenting the results of the survey and the following recommendations:

1. "With the exception of the decision not to relocate the Cenotaph, Council's resolution regarding the underground parkade in the SW corner of Galt Gardens and the location of the Transit Mall on the east edge of 5th Street be rescinded.

2. "That the Administration review options for short term and long term solutions to the downtown parking problem. This should include at grade lots, aboveground structures as well as underground parking lots excluding Galt Gardens and further that work continue on the Master Plan for Galt Gardens and further that when required, existing parking parcels be upgraded, with appropriate connecting sidewalks to the downtown core.

3. "Council is on record as indicating that signifi-

cant amounts of parking will not be removed from the downtown unless alternative provisions are made. Inasmuch as we will not be constructing additional stalls at this time, it is my [Mayor David B. Carpenter's] suggestion that the existing Transit Mall facilities, such as they are, be maintained, pro tem.

"Service to 1st Avenue should be maintained at the current temporary schedule and the Administration should be directed to design and explore again all alternatives for routing and a possible transit mall location that would allow access to 1st Avenue bus stops from all areas of the city. Council should be aware that these additional considerations may require small amendments to the time of each route; be filed and further that the recommendations be approved."

On 6 September 1988, the following additional recommendations were adopted by council:

1. "That Council accept the recommendation [which came from the committee] to disband the present Downtown Advisory Committee and that the members of the Committee be thanked for their gift to the community of time, enthusiasm, and innovation, and that they be assured that Council's commitment to the goal of imaginative downtown redevelopment remains firm and unwavering,

2. "That a new committee, to be called the Galt Gardens Revitalization Committee, be struck to complete the task of the previous committee.

3. "That, as a general guideline, the Committee be requested to plan on the basis of a time frame that could allow redevelopment to commence during the 1989 construction season.

4. "That Council formally re-adopt the recommendations of the CBD CSL Advisory Committee.

5. "That the new Committee be comprised of ten members of the public at large, representative of a broad cross section of our community life, by application through the City Clerk's office; two City staff members appointed, one from the Community Services Department and one from the Development Services Department, and two Aldermen."

The various appointments were made at a regular meeting of city council on Monday, 17 October 1988, and were: Alderman R. D. Tarleck, Alderman W. R. Cousins, David Cronkhite, Tom Hudson, Doris Balcovske, Trish Brayne, Leif Bjorseth, John Bolten, Charles Crane, Isabel Hamilton, Gordon Keith, William Lingard, Nick Paladino, and Richard Turner.

Richard Turner is a great-grandson of Sir Alexander Tilloch Galt, who organized the North Western Coal and Navigation Company in 1882 and, with his son Elliott, planned the Lethbridge townsite in 1884. Thus Sir Alexander might be thought of as partially responsible for the modern Galt Gardens Park controversy, which in 1988 his great-grandson was being asked to help solve.

APPENDIX 1

Certificates of Title

Legal Land Description: Galt Gardens Park was divided into two portions (the park proper and a central Reserve), presumably at the time of Montague Aldous' original survey. It was acquired by the City of Lethbridge in two parcels in 1910 and 1926. Descriptions are:

1. That portion of the north west quarter of Section thirty one (31) in Township eight (8) Range twenty one (21) west of the fourth meridian described as follows: That part bounded on the north by the south limit of Baroness Road, on the south by the north limit of Redpath Street, on the west by the east limit of Round Street, on the east by the west limit of Glyn Street. Excepting that portion marked "Reserve" and contained in certificate of title A. B. 89 as shown on plan Lethbridge 723 D.

Excepting thereout all mines and minerals and the right to work the same.

February 28, 1911

2. That portion of land marked "Reserve" two hundred (200) feet square bounded by the open space or streets lying to the west of blocks eight (8) and seventeen (17) north of blocks thirty two (32) and thirty three (33) and east of blocks seven (7) and eighteen (18) as said blocks are shown on a plan of the said City of Lethbridge of record in the Land Titles office for the South Alberta Land Registration District as

"Lethbridge 4353-S."

Reserving unto His Majesty all mines and minerals.
September 7, 1926

APPENDIX 11

Description of Galt Gardens Park

A 9.16-acre [3.71 ha] park, located between 1st and 3rd Avenues and 5th and 7th Streets South. The park was located on the first (1885) town plan after approval from Elliott Torrance Galt, general manager of the North Western Coal and Navigation Company, Limited, and Sir Alexander Tilloch Galt, founder of the company. In 1885 it was a ten-acre [4.05 ha] open space, called The Square, designed to be a park and playground, and a breathing space, for the city that Elliott Galt and his father were confident would one day grow up around it. Thus the property, variously called the square (1885-c.1890), The Square (1885-c.1900), The Public Square and occasionally The City Park (c.1900-1909), Galt Park and occasionally Galt Square (1909-1913), Galt Gardens (1913-1980), and Galt Gardens Park (1980-) was the first of the 75 parks and playgrounds in the City of Lethbridge or under development there in 1988. Since 1909 the name has commemorated the Galt family, notably Elliott and Sir Alexander, which developed Lethbridge. Part of the property was donated to the City of Lethbridge by Elliott Galt and his half-brother John Galt in September 1908, turned over to the city by the Alberta Railway and Irrigation Company in August 1910, and formalized by act of the Alberta Legislature in December 1910. The remaining 200 feet [61 m] square central Reserve was transferred from the Canadian Pacific Railway Company to the City of Lethbridge in September 1926.

APPENDIX 111

1910

(Second Session)

CHAPTER 32

An Act to Provide for the Registration of a Certain Transfer from the Alberta Railway and Irrigation Company to the City of Lethbridge of the Land Known as "Galt Park."

(Assented to December 16, 1910.)

His Majesty, by and with the consent of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Alberta, enacts as follows:

1. That that certain piece or parcel of land situate in the City of Lethbridge in the Province of Alberta which may be described as being that certain parcel or tract of land bounded on the north by the south limit of Baroness Road; on the south by the north limit of Redpath Street; on the west by the east limit of Round Street; on the east by the west limit of Glyn Street (excepting thereout and therefrom that portion marked "Reserve" and contained in certificate of title A. D. 89) as shown on a plan of the City of Lethbridge of record in the land titles office for the South Alberta Land Registration District as "723 D," is hereby declared to be vested in the City of Lethbridge subject to the following conditions and reservations, namely—

(a) That the property be kept undivided and intact in perpetuity;

(b) That the council of the city annually appropriate and expend such sum of money as the finances of the city from year to year will permit for the purpose of improving and beautifying the property by tree-planting, lawn-making, and horticulture;

(c) That the right of ingress and egress to and from the reserve in the centre (200 feet [61 m]) over any part of the rest of the square be reserved, such right of ingress and egress to be located as the company may decide; and to the proviso that in the event of any breach of any of the above recited conditions the lands above described shall revert to the Alberta Railway and Irrigation Company.

2. The transfer of the said lands executed by the Alberta Railway and Irrigation Company to the City of Lethbridge dated the thirty-first day of August, A. D. 1909, shall be registered in the proper registry office free from any charge for assurance fund in connection therewith, and the registrar shall make a memorandum on the certificate of title and upon the duplicate thereof that the said land is vested in the City of Lethbridge subject to the trusts above set out, but the assurance fund shall not be chargeable in respect of said land any further than it would have been if such land had been vested in the city by dedication on a registered plan as a street or public place.

ADDENDUM

Chapter 22 (1): Title to the portion marked "Reserve" was issued in the name of the City of Lethbridge on 7 September 1926. Duplicate Certificate of Title No. 35 B 105.

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